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REMARKS

I. Election/Restriction

The referenced application is an U.S. national application filed under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b) on December 7, 2000. A restriction requirement under 35 U.S.C. §121 was issued in the subject application. It is alleged that the subject application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are independent and patentably distinct:

Group I: claims 15-19, drawn to methods for distributing a virtual fax, classified in class 705, subclass 26; and

Group II: claims 1-14, drawn to methods for searching a database and a computer readable storage medium, classified in class 707, subclass 3.

With traverse, Applicant elects the invention of Group I for examination purposes.

II. Traversal of the Restriction Requirement

Applicant respectfully traverses the restriction requirement as to the inventions of Groups I and II. For the following reasons, withdrawal of the restriction requirement as to the claims of Groups I and II is requested.

The Examiner alleges that the claims of Group I and II are related as process and apparatus for its practice, and that the apparatus can be used to practice another and materially different process.

Applicant submits that there would be no undue burden upon the Examiner to search and examine the claims of Groups I and II in the present application. The inventions of Group II, drawn to methods for searching a database and a computer readable storage medium, are closely related to the inventions of Group I, drawn to methods for distributing a virtual facsimile. Therefore, even though the claims of Groups I and II are classified in different classes, it is reasonable to expect that a thorough search of Group I would and should include a search of Group II.

Accordingly, economy of Patent Office resources and those of the Applicant as well as fundamental fairness warrant the withdrawal of the restriction requirement as to the claims of Groups I and II.

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In summary, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the restriction requirement as to Groups I and II and to search and examine all pending claims 1-19 in the present application.

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that Applicant has completely responded to the restriction requirement. For all of the foregoing reasons, withdrawal of the restriction requirement between the claims of Groups I and II is respectfully requested.

Applicant submits that the claims are in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited. The Assistant Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be due in connection with this communication to Deposit Account No. 23-1703,

Dated: Dec. 4, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

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